

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4-11, 13-21, and 23-26 are pending. Claims 1, 5, 8-11, 13, 15, 17-20, and 24-26 are amended herein. No new matter is added.

Rejection of Claims 1-2, 4-11, 13-21, and 23-26

Claims 1-2, 4-11, 13-21, and 23-26 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over US Patent No. 5,214,702 to Fischer (Fischer). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection in light of the amendments to the claim and the remarks below.

In particular, claim 1 provides a method comprising reading from a first software module a set of keys associated with a trusted source, wherein the set of keys is embedded in the first software module. The method further provides for assigning a key a trusted status if the key, presented by or read from a second software module, is not on a list of compromised keys and the key is traceable to the set of keys embedded in the first software module. Fischer does not teach or suggest all the features of claim 1.

With respect to Fischer, the Examiner cites disjointed portions of the reference that individually do not teach the features of claim 1, and collectively fail to teach or suggest the invention as a whole as recited in claim 1.

First, claim 1 indicates that the reading of a set of keys is “from a first software module” and the set of keys is “embedded in the first software module”. However, the Examiner cites to no portion of Fischer that provides for the set of keys to be read from a software module in which the set of keys is embedded. Rather, Fischer provides for digital signatures embodied in nested certificates, the certificates being used to indicate the authority of various individuals in a digital transaction. Such certificates are clearly not software modules as provided in claim 1. As described in Fischer, the certificates are tools to indicate authority levels for an individual/entity, and are not otherwise functioning software modules as recited in claim 1 and supported by the specification (for example with reference to a “security manager”). Further, Fischer indicates that what is actually embedded in the certificates is text associating a key with particular individuals having authority to use the certificates, not the key itself.

Second, in claim 1, the key being analyzed is presented by or read from a second software module. Again, Fischer does not provide for such a determination, but rather reads a digital signature from an electronic certificate. This operation is very different from a key being presented by or read from the second software module and determining whether that key is traceable to one of the keys in the set of keys embedded in the first software module. The present Specification provides support for this type of embodiment in Figure 4 and the associated text, as well as elsewhere throughout the Specification. Such an embodiment allows for cross-checking other software modules, a feature not contemplated by Fischer.

Finally, in claim 1, there is a determination whether the key is identified in a list of compromised keys as a threshold to assigning the key a trusted status. Column 19, lines 36-45 of Fischer are cited for such a teaching, but provide no such teaching or suggestion. The cited portion of Fischer refers to cosignature requirements for establishing validity of a certificate, such that a certificate may be provided with a rule that requires more than one signature be present before the certificate will be deemed valid. However, at no point is there described a “compromised” list of keys (or signatures). As a consequence, there is also no teaching or suggestion of a compromised list of keys being used to determine whether a particular key should be assigned a trusted status.

For all the reasons above, claim 1 is patentable over Fischer. Thus, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Independent claims 8, 13, 17, 20, and 24 contain language that is similar to that of claim 1. Claims 8, 13, 17, 20, and 24 are thus patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claims 2, 4-7, 9-11, 14-19, 21, 23, and 25-26 are dependent on claims 1, 8, 13, 17, 20, or 24 and are thus patentable for at least the same reasons discussed above.

Conclusion

In light of the above amendments and remarks, claims 1-2, 4-11, 13-21, and 23-26 are in condition for allowance. Early issuance of Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (503) 796-2844.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge shortages or credit overpayments to Deposit Account No. 500393.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: November 30, 2007

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